

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for determining which advertisements to include with electronic content delivered to users over a network, the method comprising ~~an electronic content provider computer system performing~~ the steps of:

after accepting a first contract with a first advertiser, accepting a second contract with a second advertiser;

wherein the delivery obligations associated with the second contract are such that fulfillment of the second contract would adversely affect a level of service the first advertiser would otherwise receive under the first contract;

receiving a plurality of advertisements from a plurality of advertisers;

storing revenue information that indicates potential revenue amounts for the plurality of advertisements, wherein each of the plurality of advertisements is associated with corresponding delivery criteria and a corresponding contract of a plurality of contracts;

wherein the plurality of contracts includes the first contract and the second contract;

wherein the plurality of advertisers includes the first advertiser and the second advertiser;

~~associating each of the plurality of advertisements with a priority class, wherein the priority class associated with each of the plurality of advertisements indicates whether the corresponding advertisement is the subject of a guaranteed contract;~~

receiving, from a client that is not one of the plurality of advertisers, a request to provide over the network a piece of electronic content that includes a slot for an advertisement; and

in response to receiving the request, the ~~electronic content provider computer system performing the steps of:~~

one or more computing devices comparing slot attributes of the slot with the delivery criteria of the plurality of advertisements to determine a first subset of the plurality of advertisements that qualify for inclusion in the slot,

wherein the slot attributes of the slot include at least one of (a) the nature of the piece of electronic content, (b) the size of the slot within the piece of electronic content, or (c) the placement of the slot within the piece of electronic content;

~~filtering, out of the subset of the plurality of advertisements, advertisements that have a priority class that is lower than the priority class of any other advertisement that belongs to the subset;~~

the one or more computing devices creating a second subset of advertisements by filtering, out of the first subset, advertisements whose delivery obligations are on track to be satisfied;

wherein the second subset includes a first advertisement associated with the first contract and a second advertisement associated with the second contract;

wherein the second contract is associated with a behindness value that is currently greater than a behindness value associated with the first contract;

wherein the behindness value of each contract reflects how far behind a content provider is on satisfying the delivery obligations associated with each contract; and

selecting [[an]] the first advertisement from the second subset of advertisements to include in the slot based, at least in part, on the potential revenue amounts;

inserting said first advertisement into the slot to create a modified piece of electronic content;

delivering, as a response to the request, the modified piece of electronic content to the user.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein:
each advertisement of the plurality of advertisements has a corresponding delivery obligation and a corresponding potential revenue amount.
3. (currently amended) The method of Claim 2, wherein the selecting [[an]] the first advertisement to include further comprises:
selecting [[a]] the first advertisement instead of [[a]] the second advertisement if the corresponding potential revenue amount of the first advertisement is higher than the corresponding potential revenue amount of the second advertisement.
4. (canceled)
5. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the piece of electronic content is a web page.

6. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the piece of electronic content is a video stream.
7. (canceled)
8. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of: method recited in Claim 1.
storing revenue information that indicates potential revenue amounts for the plurality of
advertisements that are received from a plurality of advertisers, wherein each of
the plurality of advertisements is associated with corresponding delivery criteria
and a corresponding contract of a plurality of contracts;
wherein the plurality of advertisements include a first contract with a first advertiser and
a second contract with a second advertiser;
wherein the first contract was accepted before the second contract;
wherein the delivery obligations associated with the second contract are such that
fulfillment of the second contract would adversely affect a level of service the
first advertiser would otherwise receive under the first contract;
receiving, from a client that is not one of the plurality of advertisers, a request to provide
over the network a piece of electronic content that includes a slot for an
advertisement; and
in response to receiving the request, performing the steps of:

comparing slot attributes of the slot with delivery criteria of a plurality of advertisements to determine a first subset of the plurality of advertisements that qualify for inclusion in the slot;

wherein the slot attributes of the slot include at least one of (a) the nature of the piece of electronic content, (b) the size of the slot within the piece of electronic content, or (c) the placement of the slot within the piece of electronic content;

creating a second subset of advertisements by filtering, out of the first subset, advertisements whose delivery obligations are on track to be satisfied;

wherein the second subset includes a first advertisement associated with the first contract and a second advertisement associated with the second contract;

wherein the second contract is associated with a behindness value that is currently greater than a behindness value associated with the first contract;

wherein the behindness value of each contract reflects how far behind a content provider is on satisfying the delivery obligations associated with each contract; and

selecting the first advertisement from the subset of advertisements to include in the slot based, at least in part, on the potential revenue amounts;

inserting said first advertisement into the slot to create a modified piece of electronic content;

delivering, as a response to the request, the modified piece of electronic content to the user.

9. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 2 of Claim 8, wherein each advertisement of the plurality of advertisements has a corresponding delivery obligation and a corresponding potential revenue amount.~~
10. (currently amended) ~~[[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 9, storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 3 wherein selecting the first advertisement to include further comprises selecting the first advertisement instead of the second advertisement because the corresponding potential revenue amount of the first advertisement is higher than the corresponding potential revenue amount of the second advertisement.~~
11. (canceled)
12. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium of Claim 8, wherein the piece of electronic content is a web page storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 5.
13. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium of Claim 8, wherein the piece of electronic content is a video stream storing one or more sequences of

~~instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 6.~~

14-17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A computer-implemented method for determining which advertisements to include with electronic content delivered to users over a network, the method comprising ~~an electronic content provider computer system performing~~ the steps of:

after accepting a first contract with a first advertiser, accepting a second contract with a second advertiser;

wherein the delivery obligations associated with the second contract are such that fulfillment of the second contract would adversely affect a level of service the first advertiser would otherwise receive under the first contract;

storing revenue information that indicates potential revenue amounts for a plurality of advertisements, wherein each of the plurality of advertisements is associated with corresponding delivery criteria, ~~[[and]]a priority class, and a corresponding~~ contract of a plurality of contracts;

wherein the plurality of contracts includes the first contract and the second contract;

receiving a request to provide over the network a piece of electronic content that includes a slot for an advertisement; and

in response to receiving the request, ~~the electronic content provider computer system~~ performing the steps of:

one or more computing devices comparing slot attributes of the slot with the delivery criteria of the plurality of advertisements to determine a subset of the plurality of advertisements that qualify for inclusion in the slot, wherein the slot attributes of the slot include at least one of (a) the nature of the piece of electronic content, (b) the size of the slot within the piece of electronic content, or (c) the placement of the slot within the piece of electronic content; and

the one or more computing devices selecting an advertisement from the subset of advertisements to include in the slot based on, at least in part, on whether the slot is reserved for [[buyers]]advertisers that satisfy a set of criteria that is separate from the delivery obligations of the corresponding contracts;

wherein the set or criteria is based at least in part on at least one of (a) reputation of the advertisers, (b) financial stability of the advertisers, or (c) purchase history of the advertisers.

19. (currently amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein [[the]] selecting [[an]]the advertisement to include is based on the priority classes if the slot is reserved for the [[buyers]]advertisers that satisfy the set of criteria.
20. (currently amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein [[the]] selecting [[an]]the advertisement to include is based on the potential revenue amounts if the slot is not reserved for [[buyers]]advertisers that ~~are not required to~~ satisfy the set of criteria.

21. (original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the selecting an advertisement to include further comprises:

selecting a first advertisement instead of a second advertisement if the corresponding potential revenue amount of the first advertisement is higher than the corresponding potential revenue amount of the second advertisement.

- 22-24. (canceled)

25. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of: method recited in Claim 18
storing revenue information that indicates potential revenue amounts for a plurality of
advertisements, wherein each of the plurality of advertisements is associated
with corresponding delivery criteria, a priority class, and a corresponding
contract of a plurality of contracts;
wherein the plurality of contracts includes a first contract and the second contract that
was accepted after the first contract;
wherein the delivery obligations associated with the second contract are such that
fulfillment of the second contract would adversely affect a level of service the
first advertiser would otherwise receive under the first contract;
receiving a request to provide over the network a piece of electronic content that
includes a slot for an advertisement; and
in response to receiving the request, performing the steps of:

comparing slot attributes of the slot with the delivery criteria of the plurality of advertisements to determine a subset of the plurality of advertisements that qualify for inclusion in the slot,

wherein the slot attributes of the slot include at least one of (a) the nature of the piece of electronic content, (b) the size of the slot within the piece of electronic content, or (c) the placement of the slot within the piece of electronic content; and

selecting an advertisement from the subset of advertisements to include in the slot based on, at least in part, on whether the slot is reserved for advertisers that satisfy a set of criteria that is separate from the delivery obligations of the corresponding contracts;

wherein the set or criteria is based at least in part on at least one of (a) reputation of the advertisers, (b) financial stability of the advertisers, or (c) purchase history of the advertisers.

26. (currently amended) [[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 25, wherein selecting the advertisement to include is based on the priority classes if the slot is reserved for the advertisers that satisfy the set of criteria~~storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 19.~~

27. (currently amended) [[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 25, wherein selecting the advertisement to include is based on the potential revenue amounts if the slot is not reserved for advertisers that satisfy the set of criteria~~storing one or more~~

~~sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 20.~~

28. (currently amended) ~~[[A]]The computer-readable storage medium, wherein selecting an advertisement to include further comprises selecting a first advertisement instead of a second advertisement if the corresponding potential revenue amount of the first advertisement is higher than the corresponding potential revenue amount of the second advertisement~~storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 24.

29. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
exclusively offering a first portion of an inventory, of advertisement slots in electronic content, to buyers that satisfy a set of criteria; and
offering a second portion of the inventory to buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria,
wherein the buyers that satisfy the set of criteria and the buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria are advertisers that provide advertisements.

30. (previously presented) The method of Claim 29, further comprising:
offering less than the entirety of the second portion of the inventory for purchase to the buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria.

31. (previously presented) The method of Claim 30, further comprising:

setting an initial price that the buyers are allowed to bid on the second portion of the inventory.

32. (currently amended) [[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 8, wherein the instructions include ~~storing one or more sequences of~~ instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, further causes the one or more processors to perform the ~~method recited in Claim 29~~ steps of:
exclusively offering a first portion of an inventory, of advertisement slots in electronic content, to buyers that satisfy a set of criteria; and
offering a second portion of the inventory to buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria,
wherein the buyers that satisfy the set of criteria and the buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria are advertisers that provide advertisements.
33. (currently amended) [[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 32, wherein the instructions include ~~storing one or more sequences of~~ instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, further causes the one or more processors to perform the ~~method recited in Claim 30~~ step of:
offering less than the entirety of the second portion of the inventory for purchase to the buyers that are not required to satisfy the set of criteria.
34. (currently amended) [[A]]The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 33, wherein the instructions include ~~storing one or more sequences of~~ instructions which, when

executed by the one or more processors, further causes the one or more processors to perform the method recited in Claim 31 step of:
setting an initial price that the buyers are allowed to bid on the second portion of the inventory.

35. (new) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
associating each of the plurality of advertisements with a priority class, wherein the
priority class associated with each of the plurality of advertisements indicates
whether the corresponding advertisement is the subject of a guaranteed contract;
wherein creating the second subset further includes filtering, out of the first subset,
advertisements that have a priority class that is lower than the priority class of
any other advertisement that belongs to the first subset.
36. (new) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 8, wherein the instructions
include instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, further cause
the one or more processors to perform the step of:
associating each of the plurality of advertisements with a priority class, wherein the
priority class associated with each of the plurality of advertisements indicates
whether the corresponding advertisement is the subject of a guaranteed contract;
wherein creating the second subset further includes filtering, out of the first subset,
advertisements that have a priority class that is lower than the priority class of
any other advertisement that belongs to the first subset.

37. (new) The method of Claim 18, wherein the set of criteria for an advertiser includes one or more of the reputation, financial stability, or history of the advertiser.